Corporation at present and the amount involved; and

(b) whether Government propose to issue instructions on humanitarian grounds to expedite (within a month or so) those cases where claimants are orphans or widows with little support?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI) : (a) As on 31-3-86, 77929 maturity claims amounting to Rs. 29.74 crores and 23884 death claims amounting to Rs. 36.71 crores were pending with LIC. As on 31.12.86 there were 476129 claims amounting to Rs. 1122.8 crores pending with GIC and its Subsidiaries.

(b) Both LIC and GIC have taken a series of measures for expeditious settlement of all claims. The matter is under continual review by the Government. The progress of settlement of outstanding claims by LIC and GIC is closely monitored and reviewed at periodic intervals. Appropriate advice and directions are issued by Government to LIC and GIC from time to time for speedy settlement of all categories of claims. Government have, however, no proposal at present to issue separate instructions in respect of the claims of orphans and widows only.

Housing Finance Schemes pending for clearance

17. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) what are the details of the projects in the fields of housing finance and urban improvement submitted for approval by the Ministry of Urban Development;

(b) whether it is a fact these projects have been pending clearance in the Finance Ministry for more than six months; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI) : (a) No project is pending clearance in this Ministry.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Trade deficit

18. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been any improvement in the trade deficit of India during the first six months of the current financial year;

(b) whether any reviews has been made to improve the trade deficit position; and

(c) if so, what is the outcome of the review and what measures are being taken to minimise the trade dificit?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR) : (a) The latest provisional figures of India's foreign trade available for the first quarter of the current financial year i.e. April-June. 1986 place India's trade deficit at Rs. 1623.86 crores which is lower than the trade deficit of Rs. 2109.10 crores in the corresponding period of the previous year.

(b) and (c) The foreign trade situation of India is under constant review. With a view to reducing trade deficit, vigorous export promotional measures have been taken during the recent past. These include increasing our exports, easier access to machinery and raw materials to major export sectors, upgradation of technology, modification and periodic revision of our industrial policies etc. Efforts are also being made to step up our indigenous production of importables during the Seventh Five Year Plan period, particularly in the sphere of bulk imports.

Pak President's Statement on Siachen Glacier

19. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the President of Pakistan has recently admitted that Siachen Glacier was not part of Pakistan; and

(b) what is the present position of negotiations between India and Pakistan